

File #

Duxbury Clipper, Wednesday, March 8, 1995

Alden Library Project Proposal Article 10 Vote "Yes"

The Case Supporting the Upper Alden Library Project

The plan to renovate the Upper Alden School into a new library facility is the result of nearly a decade of careful study and analysis of the limitations of the present facility and the changing needs of the town. The trustees are requesting the town's approval to borrow \$3 million to fund the project.

The present library is inadequate not only in terms of size, but also in its design which hinders the growth of programs and services:

- The building, far too small for a town the size of Duxbury, is on 5 levels which makes it inefficient to run and difficult to supervise;

- The heating and plumbing systems are rapidly deteriorating and the electrical system will not support any major increase in demand due to the addition of technology or the installation of an elevator;

- The entire building is virtually inaccessible to the handicapped or disabled;

- The entire building is virtually inaccessible to the handicapped or disabled;

- Expansion on site is fraught with difficulties—the multi-level design would continue to be a problem, and its location on campus is the point of daily traffic congestion.

The Upper Alden building has the advantage of being on the campus, within walking distance of all grades above 2nd, the pool, the Art Complex Museum, the Ellison Center for Arts, tennis courts and playground, yet access from Alden St. will eliminate the traffic congestion on St. George St.

Alden's handsome and sturdy structure fits the space needs of the library expansion perfectly. Its 2 main floors allow for an open, flexible floorplan designed to be user-friendly and completely accessible:

- There will be ample space for browsing through the book collection, and the audio, video, and CD collections can be developed with the increased room;

- Thirty-five public use computer stations are planned which will provide community access to the information superhighway;

- The children's room will have areas for each age group and a special project room for story hour and crafts;

- An enlarged young adult section has been designed, which adjoins the reference area and study rooms and provides a homework center.

On the lower level, there is gallery space, a 120-seat auditorium and a smaller conference room for 32. These rooms can be used by the public for a variety of meetings, even when the library itself is closed. Kitchen facilities, restrooms and coat storage are available to these rooms, and the area can be secured from the rest of the building.

On the 2nd floor, a climate-controlled, secure room will house a collection of historical documents and archives.

Study carrels, comfortable chairs and study tables for quiet reading or research are scattered throughout the library's 2 main floors.

The cost the taxpayers are being asked to assume represents only one half the total cost of the project. A state grant requesting \$2.1 million has been filed—however, the grant is contingent upon approval of the town (at Town Meeting.) The trustees are optimistic this state grant will receive favorable review, because the project has already been awarded \$200,000 in federal grant money through the same awarding agency, and all communities are receiving equal consideration for the \$45 million available. The remaining one million dollars is being raised through private donation.

Payment of the debt service will not increase individual property tax bills, because the cost of borrowing will replace other capital projects being retired during the next 2 years.

The project has the unanimous support of the key town committees. The Board of Selectmen approved the project, as did the Finance Committee and the Fiscal Advisory Committee, both of whom scrutinized the initial funding and long range effects on the town budget.

The School Committee has given an enthusiastic vote of support, recognizing the important role the library plays in education and reasserting that it will not need to reopen the Upper Alden building for school use.

Library trustees estimate the total project cost at \$6.3 million, of which the Alden building renovation will be \$5.5 million, and the balance (\$800,000) furnishings and equipment for the new facility.

Concerned voters have asked "Couldn't we have built a cheaper library?" and "How can we be sure this project won't really cost us \$9 million by the time we're done with it?"

In assessing facility needs for the next 20 years, library trustees followed a complicated space planning

formula required of all public libraries by the Mass. Board of Library Commissioners. Duxbury needs to plan for approximately 35,000 square feet of public library space in the foreseeable future—whatever the site. Upper Alden has 35,000 square feet of net useable space. It is the only plausible site for a new library. Much sentiment attaches to the existing library building, which was a jewel in its day, but the MBLC has categorically advised Duxbury that no federal or state funds will be available for further work on the existing building because of site hazards and building constraints.

The per-square-foot costs of the proposed Alden project compare favorably with new library construction projects in Massachusetts, including Plymouth, Newton, Norton and Weston. Responding to strong community sentiment for the Alden building, trustees pursued building restoration rather than demolition.

- The Alden library project requires a 2/3 vote at Town Meeting which will be contingent upon receipt of the state grant money. But there is a cost associated with defeat of the project. Should the project not receive Town Meeting approval to borrow \$3 million for a state-of-the-art library, the state grant becomes void and the trustees will have to take immediate steps to make the present library comply with the terms of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

To make the library handicapped accessible under state building codes is estimated to cost nearly \$2 million and the interior would be reduced by half.

The Alden Library project meets the long-range needs of library in a fiscally responsible manner.

You are urged to vote "YES" on Article 10 at Duxbury's Annual Town Meeting on March 11.

Alden Project Costs

Hard Cost Construction	\$4,800,000
Soft Costs	700,000
Furnishings	<u>825,000</u>
Total	\$6,325,000

Sources of Funds

Federal Grant	\$ 200,000
State Grant	2,185,000
Town Vote	3,000,000
Private Gifts	<u>940,000</u>
Total	\$6,325,000

Cost of Doing Nothing

Elevators, Ramp	
Toilets, Passageway	\$1,282,000
Sprinklers	120,000
Masonry	100,000
Building Repair	<u>300,000</u>
Total	\$1,822,000

— Submitted by Proponents of the
Upper Alden Library Project.

Vote "No" on Article 10

The Case Against the Upper Alden Library Project

Yes, the Town of Duxbury needs a new larger building, but to "renovate" the former Alden high school is not the best for the town or the library.

"Renovate" means in this instance when all is said and done, we are to be left with 2 most unredeeming features of this building — a leaking masonry shell and a wooden attic and roof.

Examine a first floor window head on the East (front) side of the building. Notice the sagging-bent down iron lintel. This indicates rust on top of the iron angle; this indicates leaking or failed flashing; this indicates leaking face brick. Or check inside the attic south gable end brick false chimney when the interior side is corbelled to "fatten" the dummy chimney. There you see a trough with a drain to collect the leaking in water from failed flashings and brick work. The 1927 building has no backup brick or concrete block. The backup is terra cotta tile, most difficult to repair or work with.

The second old "enough to be saved" feature is a complete original wooden attic and roof to cover and protect our \$6 million dollar jewel. But wait, this will be saved by a fire protection sprinkler system. Unfortunately, the pipes will be filled with compressed air instead of water which might freeze. Do not despair. When the electronic combination heat and smoke detectors malfunction or are activated, and the compressed air leaks out (or the air compressor fails) thru a heat-fused sprinkler head or other piping failure we shall save the roof, however wet on the inside.

And, what of the South wing built in the 1950's, but old enough to save for renovation. The live load capacity of its concrete floor plan system is unknown but estimated at half the library live load requirement of 150 lbs. per square foot. Save this for light reading!

Let's consider recycling the site and not the building. The jewel on the hill will become a zircon. Duxbury needs not a Denver airport or its Big Dig.

— Submitted by Opponents of the
Upper Alden Library Project